



FIAT – Newsletter nr. 84 – December 2025

Dear Friends of FIAT,

To open this FIAT Newsletter, here are a few words from Archbishop Luc Terlinden of Mechelen-Brussels.

"We have entered Advent, the season of hope par excellence. As expressed on the first Sunday of Advent: 'Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first became believers'. Yes, every year, the season of Advent rekindles our faith in the fulfilment of God's promises in Jesus Christ and our hope. For, despite appearances to the contrary, salvation and peace are given to us through the humble and hidden birth of a little child lying in a manger on Christmas night."

You will also find an excerpt from Cardinal Suenens' book *"The Hidden Hand of God"* showing us Veronica's deep trust in God.

We wish you a blessed Advent season and a holy Christmas.

In EA,

For the FIAT team
Cecile Matthys-Ryckaert



"Even today, Jesus is being born from Mary and the Holy Spirit".

+ L.J. Cardinal Suenens



Veronica O'Brien's stay in Paris as an au pair

... When she finished school in Eltham, Lulu (Veronica's nickname adopted by her family) secretly decided to enter religious life in the Congregation of St Clotilde. The Congregation's motherhouse was in Paris, so she wanted to improve her knowledge of French.

One day, one of her schoolmates showed her a classified ad in a newspaper: a family in Clichy, near Paris, were looking for a young girl who would be willing to take care of a child and teach her some English.

Introductions were made all around, and Lulu was shown to the maid's room – a small garret which made her shiver. Then she was asked to peel the vegetables in the kitchen; it was a disaster!

But worse was yet to come. When the time came for dinner - which she was expected to share with the servants in the kitchen - Lulu innocently showed up in the family dining room, wearing an elegant evening gown.

Mr and Mrs Müller glanced at each other in surprise, but they had the presence of mind and the courtesy to react by inviting the newcomer to join them at the dinner table for the rest of her stay, and by offering her a room in their own apartment. The tone was set. Lulu innocently showed them a photo- graph, taken recently from an aero plane, of the beautiful family house in Midleton. Then her duties were explained to her. She was to take care of Gisèle, who was about four or five years old; take her out for walks and teach her a little English. The days went by uneventfully. There was, however, a slight problem with Lulu's walks with Gisèle: curiously, they seemed to take more and more time.

Finally, a relative who lived nearby was asked to clear up the mystery by following them discreetly. He soon discovered the secret: some of the time was spent in the Passionists' church on the Avenue Hoche, where Lulu would do the stations of the Cross every day, dragging Gisèle along to all fourteen stations!

At first, the Müllers found this excessive piety a little strange. In time, however, Lulu became a close friend of the family and was able to tell them - much to their surprise - that she planned to join a convent in the near future. Thanks to Lulu's influence, Mrs Müller began once again to practice her faith, which she had not done for some time. It was not long before the whole family found its way back to Sunday Mass.

(The Hidden Hand of God, Dublin, Veritas Publications, 1994, pp. 22-23).

"Whatever the gift may be that you're willing to present to God, do not forget to entrust it to Mary, because grace goes back to the donor through the same channel that brought it."
(St Bernard, 12th century)

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